that village post offices show 'nil' stock for weeks and months together and poor villagers and tribals in rural and tribal areas are deprived of the facility;

(b) whether it is a fact that much loss is incurred by Government only as a social obligation in providing cheap communications facility to the weaker sections of the society including the poor rural and tribal people;

(c) whether this shortage for the weaker sections is attributable to the large scale diversion of post cards to the elite, especially those participating in 'quiz' and other competitions on Doordarshan and otherwise organised by different fora where replies to question are sought only on post cards; and

(d) if so, whether Government propose to introduce special post cards for such elite purposes used for quiz competitions and the like, the price of which may be fixed as per cost incurred?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) to (d) In supplying post cards to a network of more than 1,52,000 post offices, shortages in some pockets occasionally occur. The deficit of the Department of Post is largely because of the fact that the postal tariffs are below their costs. Provision of cheap communication facility to the Weaker Section of the society including poor, rural and tribal people, is one of the reasons for keeping postal tariffs below cost. While large number of post cards are used in quiz and other competitions on Doordarshan, it would not be entirely correct to attribute shortage in some pockets of the country to this alone. In fact, it is the endeavour of the Govt. to increase the availability of post cards, if necessary by tapping printers in the private sector. However, since each post card costs the Department of Post Rs. 1.60 in printing, distribution and operation whereas the revenue from each post card is only 15 ps., it is felt that use of such post cards for purposes of quiz competitions do not deserve the subsidy. Appropriate legislative measures will be taken to distinguish the use of post cards for such purposes.

MOU between VSNL and DOT

852. SHRI SARADA MOHANTY : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed between the Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) and the Department of Telecommunications (DOT).

(b) if so, the salient features thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to implement that MOU ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Yes, Sir. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between DOT and VSNL for the year 1994-95.

(b) and (c) The salient features of the MOU and the steps taken to implement the same are detailed in the statement.

Statement

MOU (1994-95) *BETWEEN VSNL AND DOT*

A. *Salient features:*

(a) VSNL will pursue the following broad goals and objectives:

(I) To plan and provide full range of telecommunications services like Business Network, 64 Kbps service etc., from VSNL Gateways in India to all parts of the world to users at sea, on land and in air.

(2) To achieve and maintain high degree of customer confidence by continuous upgradation of technology, service performence and prompt attention to customers.

(3) To develop sound marketing strategy with cost effective solutions.

(4) To generate adequate internal resources to finance Company's investment plans, working capital needs and to build its reserves besides payment of dividends to VSNL's shareholders.

(5) To continously enhance the quality of services.

(6) To enlarge the availability of Overseas Telecommunications Services.

(7) To seek, promote and foster excellence amongst the work force, improve productivity update human and machine capabilities.

(8) To represent and particiapate in the activities of INTELSAT, INMARSAT, Commonwealth Telecommunications Council (CTC), Asia pacific Telecommunity (APT), and other worlbodies to cater to the interests of VSNL and the country.

Some of the important physical and financial targets are given below

Telephone paid minutes (Million)	870	
Leased Voice/data circuits (Nos.)	195	
GPSS traffic	335	Segment million
Paid Minutes per employee per day	1030	minutes
Gross margin (profit before interest, tax & depreciation)	4663	million
Net profit (profit after Tax/Capital employed X 100)	Rs. 12.5%	

B. *Steps taken to implement the MOU*

VSNL would make suitable long term plans, strategies and actions to meet the objectives indicated in the MOU. DOT will provide expeditious assistance in areas wherever required including obtaining Government clearances, settlement of accounts through agreed Revenue Sharing formula and timely provision of local leads and adequate number of circuits. VSNL will be given necessary freedom in setting up facilities as per the terms of license and general policy of the Government.

Sanction of telephones on out of turn basis

853. SHRI O. P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of telephone connections sanctioned by the Minister of State for Communications on out of turn basis out of his discretionary powers from Ist July, 1993 till date;

(b) whether the connections so sanctioned exceed five per cent of the total number of connections granted in a year; and

(c) if so, the reasons for flouting the orders of the High Court of Delhi passed on 19th July, 1993 in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) 21,287 telephone connections have been sanctioned on out of turn basis by the Minister of State for Communications out of his discretionary powers from Ist July 1993 to 30th November 1994.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Registration amount for a telephone

854. SHRI O P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited is